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Commission on the Status of Women
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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda**
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by the American Psychological Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* Reissued for technical reasons.
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Statement

We, the nongovernmental organizations listed below, commend the Commission of the Status of Women for focusing on "Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child." This focus continues the emphasis placed on the Girl Child in the Beijing Platform for Action in which countries agreed to end discrimination against girls, including violence.

Rather than restricting concerns solely to the Girl Child, we encourage the Commission to consider gender-based violence on a continuum, ranging from violence against the Girl Child, to violence against Women, and finally to violence against Older Women. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated that violence against women begins in the "cradle and continues into old age."

It is our contention that violence against the Girl Child has undesirable psychological effects, limits her ability for fulfillment as she becomes a woman, and also adversely affects her as she becomes an older woman. Therefore, gender-based violence throughout the life cycle must be eliminated so that the Girl Child may be empowered to become a fully functioning woman in society, and can have a full and rich life as she becomes an Older Woman. In this manner, the promises of the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, will be fulfilled. We also would encourage all Member States to implement the recommendations of the Secretary General's Study on Violence against Women, which was released 9 October 2006.

We further recommend that

1. All forms of violence against the Girl Child be eliminated, including but not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence, child abuse, early and forced marriage and sex trafficking.

2. As the Girl Child becomes a woman, nations should prohibit and punish perpetrators of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and sexual harassment through the development and enforcement of laws. Impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes must not be allowed to continue.

3. Gender-based violence and discrimination must be eliminated when older women become targets.

4. Economic, social and cultural attitudes and norms should be changed so that women at all stages of the life cycle are integrated positively as equal partners in society.

Note:

Statement endorsed and supported by Armenian International Women's Association, Congregations of St. Joseph, Dominican Leadership Conference, Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, Hadassah — Women's Zionist Organization of America, Hunger Project, International Council of Psychologists, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, International Women's Tribune Centre,

Pacific Rim Institute for Development and Education, Soroptimist International, United States Committee for UNIFEM, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Women's Sports Foundation, Women's Welfare Centre, World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, World Union for Progressive Judaism and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and by WomenSport International, a non-governmental organization.